Navigation

"For Where Your Treasure Is" - Annual Yearbook Reporting

January 31, 2017

Article written by Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi, Director of the United Church of Christ's Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD)

What we measure matters. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," Jesus said. In this case, the treasure is what we spend our time and energy tracking week in and week out.

I'll be honest: Yearbook data collection time is not my favorite time of year. And I'm one of the people responsible for inflicting it on the church! But with each passing year, I'm learning to like it just a little bit more.

Part of why I dislike this process has to do with what we measure. Historically and presently, we ask churches to report the number of "butts in the pews and dollars in the bank," roughly speaking. And I get it—these numbers are helpful to us in so many ways. They help us track trends over time and perform the types of analyses that help us to learn some things about the United Church of Christ in the present moment. I know this more than anyone else (so this is not an excuse to skip reporting these figures!).

As someone who is committed to not only the church of the present, but also the church of the future, it's difficult to hear when churches tell me that these are the only numbers they are tracking. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Where else might our treasure lie?

Members and money are inputs—internal measures of the church. What about outputs—what impact is the church making in the world? Last year, two new categories were introduced into Yearbook reporting: Community Engagement and Total Church Participants. We started asking

churches to begin tracking some outputs in addition to inputs, like how many lives were touched by the ministries of a congregation, or how many people looked to the church and its minister for current and future pastoral needs (such as hospital and nursing home visitations, funerals, weddings, and baptisms). For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Some churches have seen these additional categories as more work; others have seen these as opportunities to share how their mission has been lived out within local communities and the world. In any case, my hope is that these categories are helping to create a broader conversation on what we measure and how we measure it, perhaps even shifting paradigms in the process. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Maybe Yearbook data collection time is not the worst time of year after all…

Read some reasons why reporting your church's data is important.

The goal for the Southeast Conference is 100% participation in the UCC Data and Yearbook Collection. The deadline for entering data is March 8, 2017. A hard copy mailing has been sent to every church. If you require assistance with data entry, please contact Heather Bardole, the SEC Office Administrator, at 404-719-6572. You will need your church ID Number to log in. If you do not know the number, please contact the Southeast Conference at registrar@secucc.org.

There are instructions to walk you through the process and a link to the log in at http://www.ucc.org/research_yearbook . Be sure to have the instructions available before you start to enter your data. The magical "ADD or SUBMIT" buttons mean that the data has been entered and you will not be able to change it. If you save incorrect information, please contact Heather Bardole at registrar@secucc.org so that the information can be changed by the national office. Please send an email to the Conference Office at registrar@secucc.org when you have completed your data entry.

Please do not contact the national office with questions or issues related to the data hub. Instead contact Heather Bardole at registrar@secucc.org or 404-719-6572. The goal is 100% participation from the churches of the Southeast Conference. Thank you for helping us achieve this goal!

Share this:

Facebook 3 | Twitter | Google | Tumblr | Pinterest | LinkedIn | Print